Lack of secure communication system in Cheetah/Chetak Helicopters

1692. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the majority of Cheetah/Chetak helicopter fleet was operating without secure communication system;

(b) whether 45 communication system sets were procured at a cost of Rs. 7.15 crore during November, 1997 for fitting in these helicopters, but a lot of them have not been installed even though their warranty period is over and these helicopters are still operating without secure communication system; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The communication sets procured for fitment on Cheetah Helicopters are for long-range communication. While some of these sets have been installed, the rest are in the process. The delay of fitment has taken place due to continuous involvement of these helicopters in operation/logistic task.

***In situ* promotions to assistants and UDCs of AFHQ**

1693. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal to grant *in situ* promotions to Assistants and UDCs of AFHQ is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the same has been sent to the DoP and T for approval;

(d) if so, the reaction of that Department; and

(e) the specific reasons leading the AFHQ authorities to recommend their cases when almost all other cadres are facing acute stagnation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES); (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Procedure for promotion of Army Officers

1694. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state: